

# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



## INTRODUCTION

The Consolidated Plan, mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), is intended to provide guidance in the development of local policies, programs and strategies that address housing, homelessness, and community development needs over a three-to five-year period. It combines the planning, application, and reporting requirements for the following HUD programs that the City administers: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI).

The participation of City residents is considered an essential element in the development of the Consolidated Plan. This Citizen Participation Plan outlines the mechanisms the City of Falls Church will employ to involve citizens and other critical partners (e.g., local agencies, nonprofits, citizen groups, etc.) in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Consolidated Plan.

### Consultation in the Development of the Consolidated Plan

The purpose of the participation is to provide opportunities for collaboration and collective problem solving among the public and private agencies in the City of Falls Church and organizations. The lead agency for the development of the Consolidated Plan and the majority of the City's housing and community development programs is the City of Falls Church Housing & Human Services (HHS) Division.

As part of the required consultation for the development of the Consolidated Plan, HHS will consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services. These agencies included:

- Fairfax County Health Department
- Fairfax County Department of Family Services
- Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development
- Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing & Development
- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (mental health)
- City of Falls Church: Department of Development Services (Planning, Zoning) Environmental Services (Engineering, Public Works), Department of Community Services (Parks & Recreation), Department of Public Safety; Falls Church City Public Schools
- Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (public employment services)
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority
- Fairfax Area Agency on Aging.

The City also consulted with community organizations, local businesses, and other interested parties.

### Public Information

The Consolidated Plan will be published so that it gives citizens, public agencies and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and submit comments. Under terms of this Citizen Participation Plan the City will publish the following items before the Consolidated Plan is adopted: 1) the amount of CDBG, HOME, ADDI, or other HUD federal assistance the City expects to receive; 2) the range of activities that may be undertaken and the estimated number of low- and moderate-income persons that will benefit from the activity; and, 3) the City's plan to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced.





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## PARTICIPATION OF TARGET AUDIENCES

The City of Falls Church will provide citizens, public agencies, civic, non-profit, and other community organizations, and all interested parties opportunities to participate in the process for developing the Consolidated Plan. Citizen involvement will include: 1) oversight of the Plan's development; 2) involvement of relevant City boards, commissions, and committees; 3) input from members of the general public, and from community, civic, and non-profit organizations meeting housing and community development needs; and 4) active outreach to very low- and low-income residents, persons with limited English Proficiency, and persons with disabilities in order to solicit their comments and concerns.

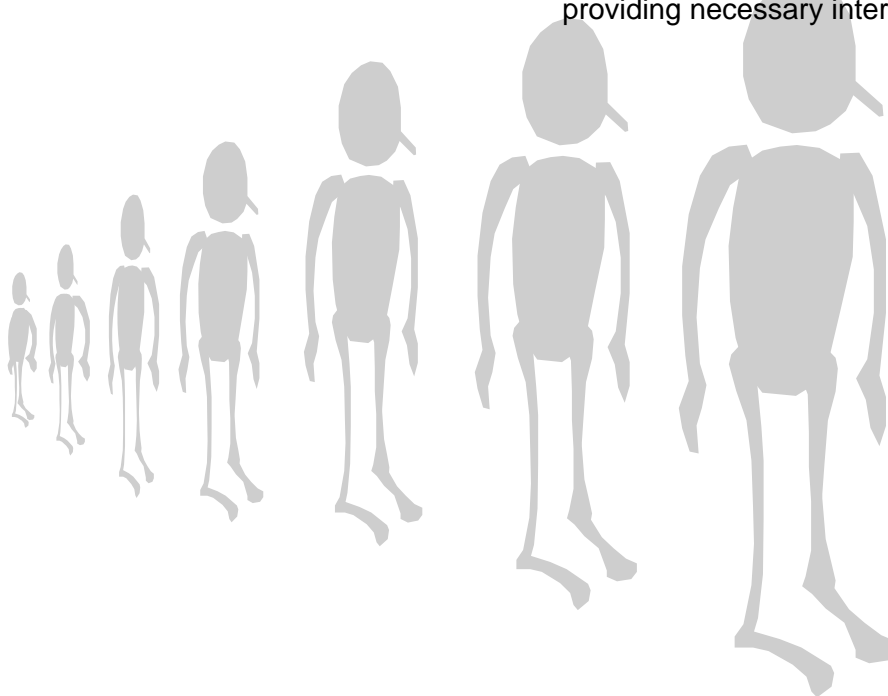
**Citizen Oversight:** The City of Falls Church Housing Commission will oversee the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan. Commission members are City residents interested in housing issues.

**City Boards, Commissions, & Committees:** The Housing Commission will solicit input from other relevant citizen advisory bodies which oversee policy development and implementation regarding housing and community development issues.

**General Public:** Interested citizens will have an opportunity to provide comments and voice concerns at public hearings.

**Community Organizations:** The Housing Commission will solicit input from public agencies, civic and community organizations, local non-profit organizations, City and School staff, local businesses, and other organizations whose purpose relates to housing, neighborhoods, community development, or economic development. Special outreach will be made to civic groups/advocacy organizations representing residents of very low- and low-income neighborhoods. Community organizations will be encouraged to involve actual and potential service or program beneficiaries.

**Very Low- and Low-Income Residents:** Special outreach to very low- and low-income residents will be made by holding public hearings in relevant neighborhoods and by providing necessary interpretation services.





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## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be the primary mechanism for soliciting citizen input regarding housing and community development needs, proposed activities and strategies, and program performance review. At least two public hearings will be conducted annually: 1) to solicit input from the target populations regarding the City's housing, community development, and homeless service needs; and 2) to solicit comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan.

All hearings will be open to the public. The central public hearing site (Falls Church City Hall, 300 Park Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia) is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Additional public hearings may be held at local apartment complexes with significant numbers of low- and moderate-income households and communities where the majority of households speak a language other than English. Language interpretation services will be available to facilitate public participation.

Notices about public hearings will be published at least two weeks prior to the scheduled public hearing and at least 30 days before the publication or amendment of the Consolidated Plan.

Potential participants will be informed of public hearings by the following methods:

- Notices will be sent to citizen groups, civic organizations, religious institutions, and individuals expressing interest in the issues.
- Notices will be published in the local newspaper and will contain notification of public hearings in English, Spanish, and/or Vietnamese.
- Notices in English and Spanish will be distributed to residents of the Westbrook Commons and Lee Square apartment complexes, to encourage the participation of households who speak Spanish as their primary language. Notices in English and Vietnamese will be distributed at the Winter Hill Apartments, which has a significant number of households that speak Vietnamese as their primary language and is the City's only apartment complex for low-income elderly households.
- Notices will be aired on the Falls Church Cable Television Public Access Channel.

In compliance with American with Disability Act (ADA), all notices will advise potential participants that reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure their access. This will include sign-language interpretation, auxiliary hearing devices, and other necessary accommodations.





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## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN REVIEWING THE PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED PLAN

A draft of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be made available for public review and comment. Notice of the availability of the draft Consolidated Plan will include federally required ADA statement. Individuals will have a minimum of 30 days notice to review the Plan and submit comments before final adoption by the Falls Church City Council.

Notice of the availability of the draft Plan will be made via:

- Letters to a variety of citizen groups, civic organizations, churches, and individuals expressing interest in the program.
- The City's newsletter published in the local newspaper will include English, Spanish, and Vietnamese summaries of the draft Plan and a listing of locations at which the complete Plan is available for review.
- Notices in Spanish and English will be distributed to residents of Westbrook Commons, a property financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Notices in English and Vietnamese will be distributed at the Winter Hill Apartments, a community that receives rental subsidies through the project-based Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation Program.
- Notices will be placed at the Falls Church Senior Center and printed in the Senior Times newsletter.

Copies of the draft Plan will be available for public review at the Mary Riley Styles Public Library and at the Housing and Human Services (HHS) Division and on the HHS website. In addition, the draft document will be circulated to all relevant City Boards & Commissions.

### Inclusion of Public Comment

Citizen comments from public hearings and written testimony will be summarized and included in both the draft and the final version of the Consolidated Plan. A summary of citizen comments that were not accepted and the reasons why they were not accepted also will be included.

### Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided by the Housing and Human Services Division to offer guidance to citizens and organizations wanting to participate in the consolidated planning process or to access program funding.

### Consolidated Plan Amendments

Citizens will receive reasonable notice and will have the opportunity to respond to any substantial amendments proposed for the Consolidated Plan.

### Criteria and Procedures for Amending the Consolidated Plan

Prior to amending the Consolidated Plan, proposed changes will be published in the local newspaper, the Falls Church News Press. Citizens will be allowed at least 30 days to comment. Comments will be considered, and final amendments will be approved by the Falls Church City Council and signed by the City Manager. The amendments will be made available to the public and submitted to HUD.

The City of Falls Church may amend its Consolidated Plan in certain circumstances: (1) not to carry out an activity described in the Consolidated Plan; (2) to carry out an activity not previously described; or (3) to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

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## **Consolidated Plan Evaluation**

HUD's response to the submission of the Consolidated Plan will be made available for public review at the Mary Riley Styles Public Library and the Housing and Human Services Division.

## **Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan**

Citizens will be provided opportunities to recommend modifications to the City's Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. This plan is designed to minimize displacement and assist those displaced as a result of activities funded through the Consolidated Plan.

## **Complaints**

The City, through Housing and Human Services Division, will respond to any written complaint or grievance within 15 working days where practicable.

## **Records**

Citizens will have access to records of the Consolidated Plan and other related policies or certifications for at least five years. Through these efforts the City of Falls Church seeks to increase community interest and participation in all stages of the Consolidated Planning process.

Approved by City Council  
December 13, 2004